United Nations S/2018/194

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 March 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

The Syrian Government is committed to the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian law. It is prepared to engage in earnest with positive international initiatives that are consistent with the interests of the Syrian people, particularly with a view to bringing an end to the bloodshed throughout Syria and protecting the lives of Syrian citizens. Syria has stated that it is pleased with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018), and especially with the positive trends that can be seen in the resolution.

The Syrian Arab Republic particularly welcomes fact that, in accordance with the principles of the Charter, the resolution includes a strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Syria welcomes the call for a humanitarian pause on all Syrian territory to enable the sustained, safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid in accordance with international law. Syria takes a positive view of the provision stating that the cessation of hostilities shall not apply to military operations against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida the Nusrah Front and other terrorist groups, as designated by the Security Council.

The Syrian armed forces that are carrying out military operations to eliminate terrorists in the eastern Ghutah are fulfilling their counter-terrorism mission, which is both a right and a duty. The Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms that, in accordance with international humanitarian law, its forces have taken all of the necessary measures to protect civilians. For that purpose, only a few hours after the adoption of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018), they enacted a daily five-hour ceasefire and established a safe humanitarian corridor to protect the residents and allow civilians to depart securely from the areas where terrorists are present. They have offered the civilians accommodation and health care.

On 1 March 2018, the Syrian Government facilitated access for a humanitarian assistance convoy to the Syrian city of Afrin. The Western States have been ignoring the ongoing barbaric Turkish attack on the city and its surrounding villages. The attack has claimed numerous lives, particularly of women and children. It has destroyed property, displaced civilians and caused a severe shortfall in humanitarian necessities, especially food and medicine. On 5 March, the Syrian Government facilitated access to the eastern Ghutah for a humanitarian assistance convoy comprising 46 trucks laden with various essential items. It is currently making preparations to enable another assistance convoy to enter the region. The terrorists

and armed groups in the eastern Ghutah showed their true criminal nature by bombarding the convoy while it was returning to Damascus.

Every day, Syrian Arab Army helicopters have been dropping leaflets on the villages and towns of the eastern Ghutah in order to ensure that civilians who wish to leave areas where terrorists are deployed know how they can reach the safe corridor for civilian evacuation. However, over the last eight days, the armed terrorist groups have continued to bombard the humanitarian corridor established by the Syrian State, using force of arms to prevent civilians from reaching the corridor. This criminal behaviour has been ignored and abetted by those States that sponsor the terrorist groups in the eastern Ghutah.

The terrorist organizations and their sponsors in Washington, London, Riyadh and Ankara have shown contempt for civilian lives and the principles of international law. That much is hardly surprising. It is, however, deplorable that the United States, France and Britain, which pressed for the adoption of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018), have not issued a single statement condemning the armed groups' violations of the resolution and their attacks on the city of Damascus and the surrounding areas, which have killed and injured hundreds of innocent civilians. Instead, those States have launched a media campaign of disinformation, lies and rumours regarding the purported use of chemical weapons.

The behaviour of those States that clamoured for the adoption of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018), not to mention the statements that followed its adoption, show that their true purpose was not to reach a genuine truce, or even to protect civilians and fulfil their needs, but rather to use the United Nations as a means to hamper the progress made by the Syrian Arab Army and its allies in deterring and confronting the terrorist groups.

In bringing these facts to the attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic wishes to urge them to fulfil their responsibility by pressing those States that support and sponsor the terrorist groups in the eastern Ghutah to comply with the provisions of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018). Those States must rein in the groups that have been bombarding residential areas, civilian institutions and medical facilities and caused numerous civilian casualties, most of them women and children. Most recently, on Monday 5 March 2018, the groups bombarded a number of medical facilities in Damascus and Rif Dimashq, namely the Tishrin, Biruni and Avicenna hospitals. On a previous occasion, they bombarded the surgical hospital. Those attacks have killed or injured a number of patients and caused significant material damage to the facilities.

Nevertheless, disinformation and double standards have failed to distract public opinion from the basic facts at hand. The States that sponsor the armed terrorist groups must desist from that course of action in order to stop the downward spiral that is under way the region and the world.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Permanent Representative

United Nations A/ES-10/772–S/2018/195

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
14 March 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Identical letters dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to my recent letter of 2 March 2018 (A/ES-10/768-S/2018/180) regarding the violations and crimes by Israel, the occupying Power, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, I am compelled to draw your attention to the continued rise in tensions as Israel's right-wing Government persists with its oppressive, provocative and illegal decisions and measures.

Illegal Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the blockade and the bombardment of the Gaza Strip, the demolition and confiscation of Palestinian homes and properties, the arrest and detention of Palestinian civilians, including children, and violent military raids into Palestinian villages, towns, cities and refugee camps, causing death and injury to Palestinian civilians, continue unabated, causing further instability and deterioration of conditions on the ground.

The persistence of such actions starkly illustrates just how much Israel, the occupying Power, has been emboldened by recent developments and the ongoing lack of accountability. Before the eyes of the world, the Israeli Government has abandoned all restraint and is doing everything in its power to bury the two-State solution and any chance for a just peace, in absolute contempt of the law and the resolutions of the Security Council and General Assembly. Moreover, it persists on this reckless and ruthless path in blatant disrespect of the will of the international community as articulated in those relevant resolutions and in the numerous statements made in recent and past debates at the United Nations and other international forums.

While it is impossible to record each and every crime committed by Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people, listed below are just a few of the countless Israeli crimes perpetrated in the period since our previous letter of 12 February 2018 (A/ES-10/767-S/2018/113), all reflecting policies aimed at dehumanizing and denying the rights of the Palestinian civilian population, traumatizing generation after generation under this illegal occupation.

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Palestinian casualties

Lethal and indiscriminate force continues to be routinely unleashed by Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians, causing wilful and wanton death and injury to innocent civilians, in grave violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law. In this regard, we must highlight the deepening vulnerability of Palestinian children, as they continue to bear the brunt of this increasingly violent and repressive occupation regime, which continues to devastate even more Palestinian families. The following are among the recent casualties caused by the Israeli occupying forces:

On 26 February 2018, occupying forces shot and killed a Palestinian teenager, Ismail Saleh Abu Reyala (age 18), and detained two other fishermen as they sailed off the coast of the northern Gaza Strip.

On 22 February 2018, a Palestinian man died while in Israeli custody shortly after being detained by occupying forces before dawn in his home in Jericho. Video footage gruesomely revealed Yassin Omar Al-Saradih (age 33) being repeatedly beaten, kicked and struck with the weapon of an Israeli soldier. The Palestinian Prisoners' Society released a statement saying that Yassin Omar Al-Saradih (age 33) was pronounced dead after suffering from seizures and being exposed to large amounts of tear gas after occupying forces reportedly heavily fired tear gas in the area during the raid.

On 19 February 2018, Israeli air strikes on the Gaza Strip killed two Palestinian teenagers, Bassam Muhammad Sabbah (age 17) and Abdullah Ayman Abu Sheikha (age 17), both from the Al-Salam neighbourhood, and another two Palestinians were injured.

On 15 February 2018, a Palestinian youth was reportedly severely beaten by a group of Israeli settlers when they raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the Old City of Occupied East Jerusalem.

Illegal blockade on the Gaza Strip and grave humanitarian situation

In the Gaza Strip, the occupying Power continues with its policies and measures of the massive collective punishment of the civilian population held captive there under its illegal and immoral decade-long blockade. Two million civilians — children, women, men, older persons and sick persons — are trapped in this inhumane situation, suffering from a dire socioeconomic and humanitarian crisis deliberately caused by the occupying Power that is affecting every single aspect of life in Gaza.

In addition, the occupying Power continues to routinely carry out military aggressions against Gaza. In the recent period, this has included the launching of several air strikes, killing 5 Palestinians, including 2 children, and injuring 65.

Israeli occupying forces also continue to target Palestinian fisherman with gunfire from Israeli navy boats, endangering their lives, as evidenced yet again in the killing of Ismael Saleh Abu Reyala on 26 February, placing them in a constant state of fear, and destroying the livelihoods of the families reliant on the fishing trade for their survival.

Settlement activities

Israel has been equally unrelenting in its illegal colonization practices, with settlement and wall construction continuing unabated throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory and particularly in and around Occupied East Jerusalem. As the occupying Power builds and expands more illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitute not only grave

breaches of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Geneva Convention) and blatant disrespect of the July 2004 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, but also constitute war crimes as defined by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, it also continues with its illegal, repressive and punitive practice of home demolitions, devastating countless Palestinian families and leaving them homeless and hopeless.

On 25 February 2018, the so-called "Israeli ministerial committee for legislation" approved a bill barring Palestinians from appealing directly, particularly with regard to settlements constructed on private Palestinian land, to the so-called Israeli Supreme Court.

On 21 February 2018, Israeli occupying forces razed lands in Palestinian villages surrounding Janin and Al-Khalil (Hebron), to clear the way for the building of a section of Israel's annexation wall around the illegal Israeli settlement of "Shaked", which in effect will leave the Palestinian civilians in Janin-area towns with no road to connect them with their lands from the northern side of the villages. In addition, the expansion of Israel's wall in the area will result in the confiscation of more than 1,000 dunums (247 acres) of lands belonging to Palestinians from Janin-area towns such as Yaabad and Nazlat al-Sheikh Zaid.

On 21 February 2018, occupying forces demolished a Palestinian house, agricultural structure and a commercial structure in the Shufat and Beit Hanina neighbourhoods of Occupied East Jerusalem.

In Al-Khalil (Hebron), Israeli bulldozers razed six dunums (1.5 acres) of agricultural lands in the village of Baqa'a in the eastern Al-Khalil (Hebron). The lands are located near a road that leads to the illegal Israeli settlement of "Qiryat Arba", home to a group of fanatical, extremist Israeli settlers who continue to terrorize the Palestinian civilian population in the area.

On 15 February 2018, Israeli occupying forces demolished two Palestinian homes in Al-Khalil (Hebron) under the pretext of unpermitted construction.

Israeli occupying forces also continue to routinely and cruelly demolish internationally funded schools and other humanitarian projects. The destructive impact of such Israeli violations on Palestinian communities and on the situation on the ground is immense, as reflected in the deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions and deepening anger and frustration among the Palestinian civilian population living under this occupation of more than half a century.

In this regard, we must recall that the forced displacement or transfer of civilians by the occupying Power, the destruction of civilian properties and acts of collective punishment against the civilian population under its occupation all constitute breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Israel must be held accountable for all such crimes, without exception.

Prisoners/detainees

At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, continues its violent arrest and detention raids throughout the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian civilians are being detained daily, with young men and boys especially targeted by the occupying forces, who routinely assault, humiliate and severely abuse, including torture, Palestinian civilians arbitrarily arrested or detained.

Since 12 February alone, 377 Palestinians have been jailed or detained by occupying forces. We call for this illegal practice to end and for Israel to release the approximately 7,000 Palestinian prisoners, in particular the more than 300 children,

that it continues to hold captive in its prisons and detention centres in contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The destructive impact of the above-mentioned Israeli violations — and the thousands upon thousands of other daily violations and crimes being perpetrated against the Palestinian people under this illegal occupation — is immense, as reflected in rising tensions, the deteriorating socioeconomic and humanitarian conditions, and deepening anger and frustration among the population. Defenceless Palestinian civilians in the Occupied State of Palestine are living in constant fear as hopes for an end to Israel's half-century military occupation and for a peaceful settlement are rapidly fading.

We must thus repeat today our appeal to the international community to provide protection for the Palestinian people, as a matter of urgency and in accordance with international humanitarian law. We also continue to call upon the international community, including the Security Council, to act in line with their legal obligations and commitments to compel a halt to all illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied State of Palestine, including in East Jerusalem. Israel must be held fully accountable in accordance with international law and the principles of justice for all of its violations and for its continuing obstruction of peace, otherwise it will never change course and will continue to act with the brazen impunity and contempt it is so arrogantly displaying.

The Security Council in particular must immediately act to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations and implement its own resolutions, including resolution 2334 (2016), in order to alleviate the hardships facing the Palestinian people and to salvage the prospects for actually realizing a just and peaceful solution that can finally bring an end to this injustice and allow the Palestinian people to finally live in freedom and dignity in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, side by side with all of their neighbours.

This letter is in follow-up to our 625 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 2 March 2018 (A/ES-10/768-S/2018/180) constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador, Permanent Observer
of the State of Palestine to the United Nations

United Nations S/2018/196

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 March 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 27 February 2018 from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, which includes the communiqué of the 748th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, held on 24 January 2018, regarding the situation in Lesotho (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

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Annex

Letter dated 27 February 2018 from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to you with regard to the situation in Lesotho. As you may be aware, at its 748th meeting, held on 24 January 2018, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union received a comprehensive briefing from the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the evolution of the situation in Lesotho and the efforts being made by SADC to assist in the search for a lasting solution to the current challenges facing that country, including the deployment of the SADC preventive mission in Lesotho.

In the meantime, SADC has requested the African Union to provide technical and financial support for the preventive mission, in order for the mission to more effectively discharge its current mandate. The Peace and Security Council welcomed the request and the Commission dispatched a technical assessment team to Lesotho, from 4 to 9 February 2018, with a view to making proposals, in consultation with the secretariat of the Southern African Development Community, on the support required. The Peace and Security Council will soon consider the report of the technical assessment mission and take appropriate decisions.

I am forwarding herewith the Peace and Security Council communiqué of 24 January 2018 (see enclosure) and I would be most grateful if the present letter and its enclosure could be transmitted to the Security Council for its information and action as may be appropriate

(*Signed*) Moussa **Faki Mahamat**

Enclosure

[Original: English and French]

Communiqué of the 748th meeting of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, held on 24 January 2018

The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU), at its 748th meeting held on 24 January 2018, adopted the following decision on the deployment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) contingent mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho:

Council,

1. **Takes note** of the briefing made by the Secretariat of (SADC on the deployment to the Kingdom of Lesotho, as mandated by the Double Troika Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government on 15 September 2017. Council **also takes note** of the statements made by the delegations of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa in its capacity as the Chair of SADC;

2. **Welcomes** the Communiqué of the Double Troika Summit of SADC Heads of State and Government of 15 September 2017, which approved the deployment of the SADC Preventive Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho (SAPMIL). Furthermore, Council **welcomes** the deployment of SAPMIL, a multidimensional force comprising of a total of 258 personnel, as follows 207 Military, 24 Police, 15 Intelligence and 12 Civilian Experts for an initial period of six months, with effect from 20 November 2017, within the framework of the African Standby Force (ASF). Council **Acknowledges** that the objective of the deployment is to stabilize the political and security situation in the Kingdom of Lesotho; implement the recommendations of the SADC Commission of Inquiry; and to create a secure, stable and peaceful environment conducive for the rule of law necessary for the implementation of constitutional, parliamentary, judicial, public and security sector reforms;

3. **Underscores** that SAPMIL has been established in line with the United Nations (UN) Charter, Chapter VI, the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU and the relevant provisions contained in the SADC Treaty, Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, including the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) establishing the SADC Standby Brigade of 2007;

4. **Welcomes** the SADC request for support from the AU for the provision of technical and financial support for SAPMIL, in particular for the provision of support for the initial six months for a budget of USD 1,613,928.00 that the region urgently needs to mobilise in order to cater for the shortfall and allow the Mission to carry out its mandate within the initial six months. In this regard, Council **appeals** to all AU Member States, the UN and partners to extend their support, particularly technical and financial support to SAPMIL. Council **requests** the Chairperson of the Commission, in consultation with the SADC Secretariat, to make proposals on technical and financial support to the SAPMIL operation and update the PSC on the matter;

5. **Commends** the commitment by the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho to finding a lasting solution to its security situation and **encourages** them to implement the various reforms outlined above in paragraph 2. Furthermore, Council **expresses its appreciation** to SADC and to the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho for appraising it on the prevailing political and security situation in Lesotho;

6. **Requests** the Chairperson of the Commission to transmit the communiqué to the UN Secretary-General and to request that it be circulated as an official UN Security Council document, as well as to other relevant international stakeholders;

7. **Decides** to remain actively seized of the matter.

United Nations S/2018/197

Security Council

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8 March 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith an information bulletin dated 6 March 2018 from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (6 March 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The situation in the de-escalation areas has been assessed as stable.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 14 incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: 6 in Damascus, 6 in Ladhiqiyah and 2 in Aleppo.

The Turkish representative office has reported six incidents of gunfire: five in Damascus Governorate and one in Idlib Governorate.

Most of the incidents of mortars and small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters belonging to terrorist groups.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 1,764 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,474 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 86 persons.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 72,469 persons.

The safe passage of two United Nations humanitarian convoys was assured to Duma in Damascus Governorate and to Tall al-Dhahab in Dar'a Governorate. Food and essential items with a total cargo weight of 364 tons were delivered to the local population.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process remains unchanged — it is still 2,427.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/198

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 March 2018

Original: English

Netherlands: draft resolution

The Security Council,

Recalling its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, in particular its resolution 2344 (2017) extending through 17 March 2018 the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA),

Stressing the important role that the United Nations will continue to play in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan,

Recalling its recent visit to Kabul from 13–15 January as an affirmation of the international community's continued and steadfast support for a peaceful, secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan,

Reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, as well as its continued support for the Government and people of Afghanistan as they rebuild their country and strengthen democratic institutions,

Stressing the central importance of a comprehensive and inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process to support reconciliation for all those who are prepared to reconcile as laid forth in the Kabul Conference Communiqué and further elaborated in the Bonn Conference Conclusions, aimed at creating a peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of Afghanistan and welcoming efforts to advance the peace process, including via the High Peace Council,

Emphasizing the vital role of the Kabul Process and welcoming the strategic consensus between the Government of Afghanistan and the international community on the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF),

Welcoming the start of the fourth year of the National Unity Government and emphasizing the importance of all parties in Afghanistan working within its framework in order to achieve a peaceful and prosperous future for all the people of Afghanistan,

Recalling the announcement by the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan that parliamentary and district council elections will take place in 2018, emphasizing the importance of accelerated progress on electoral reform in Afghanistan and towards the holding of credible and inclusive parliamentary and district council elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019, and stressing the need for continued support of UNAMA in this regard, at the request of the Afghan authorities,

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Stressing the importance of a comprehensive approach to address the security, economic, governance and development challenges in Afghanistan, which are of an interconnected nature, and recognizing that there is no purely military solution to ensure the stability of Afghanistan,

Reiterating the importance of advancing regional, interregional and international cooperation, in support of building a community of shared future for mankind, to promote long-term peace, security, prosperity, sustainable development and human rights in Afghanistan, and welcoming joint efforts to enhance dialogue and collaboration and to advance shared goals of economic development across the region,

Recognizing in this regard the positive impact and ongoing importance of international commitments made at the NATO Warsaw Summit in 2016, and as reiterated in 2017, and the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan in 2016, and welcoming the announcement of the US Strategy for Afghanistan on 21 August 2017 and the European Union Strategy on Afghanistan, adopted on 16 October 2017 as important developments in the context of continued international support for security, development and stability in Afghanistan,

Welcoming the contribution of the International Contact Group (ICG) to the United Nations efforts in coordinating and broadening international support for Afghanistan,

Taking note of the Seventh Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan on November 14–15 2017 and the Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process Ministerial Meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan on 1 December 2017,

Underlining the importance of operationally capable, professional, inclusive and sustainable Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) for meeting Afghanistan's security needs, stressing the commitment of the international community to support their further development, and commending the resiliency, progress and exceptional courage displayed by ANDSF as well as their leading role in securing their country and fighting against international terrorism, and welcoming in this regard ongoing commitments to enhance the effectiveness and accountability of Afghan national security institutions,

Expressing its deep concern about the continuous high level of violence in Afghanistan, especially the number of civilian casualties, condemning in the strongest terms all terrorist activity and all violent attacks, reiterating that attacks deliberately targeting civilians are prohibited under international humanitarian law and may amount to war crimes, and calling for compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable,

Recognizing the continuously alarming threats posed by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, as well as by Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates and other terrorist groups, violent and extremist groups and illegal armed groups, as well as the challenges related to the efforts to address such threats, and expressing its serious concern over the harmful consequences of violent and terrorist activities by all the above-mentioned groups on the capacity of the Afghan Government to guarantee the rule of law, to provide security and basic services to the Afghan people, and to ensure the improvement and protection of their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Expressing concern with the serious threat that anti-personnel mines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices (IED) pose to the civilian population, and noting the need to enhance coordination and information-sharing, both between Member States and with the private sector,

Expressing serious concern at the presence and growth of ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates activity in Afghanistan, posing serious threats to the security of Afghanistan and the countries of the region, including in Central Asia, and affirming its support to the efforts by the ANDSF to combat them as well as assistance by Afghanistan's international partners in this regard,

Reaffirming that all parties to armed conflict must take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians, especially women, children and displaced persons, including from sexual and gender-based violence, and that perpetrators of such violence must be held accountable,

Noting the ongoing work of the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1988 (2011) and the continuation of the cooperation of the Afghan Government, the High Peace Council and UNAMA with the Committee, including its Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, and expressing its concern over the increasing cooperation of the Taliban with other organizations involved in criminal activities,

Expressing its deep concern about the continued high level of civilian casualties, as noted in the February 2018 UNAMA report on Protection of Civilians in armed conflict, and condemning the suicide attacks, often in civilian-populated areas, and the targeted and deliberate killings, in particular of women and girls, including high-level women officials and those promoting women's rights, as well as journalists,

Expressing its deep concern about the significant increase in the cultivation, production, trade and trafficking of illicit drugs in Afghanistan, as reflected in the Afghanistan Opium Survey published by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on 15 November 2017, encouraging the government of Afghanistan supported by the international community and regional partners to intensify efforts to address drug production and trafficking in a balanced and integrated approach, in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility in addressing the drug problem of Afghanistan, and recognizing the important role played by UNODC in this regard,

Reaffirming that gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment, education, human rights, and full participation and engagement in all levels of decision-making are critical to efforts to maintain peace and security in Afghanistan, urging the full implementation of resolution 1325 (2000), and emphasizing the need for protection for women's rights activists,

Expressing serious concern over the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, and supporting the Afghan Government's essential role in the provision of humanitarian assistance to its citizens in coordination with efficient and effective delivery by United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, consistent with a One UN approach,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General of 27 February 2018 (S/2018/165);

2. *Expresses its appreciation* for the United Nations' long-term commitment, including throughout the Transformation Decade, to support the Government and the people of Afghanistan and reiterates its full support to the work of UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and stresses the need to ensure continued adequate resourcing for UNAMA to fulfil its mandate;

3. *Welcomes* the findings of the strategic review of the mandated tasks, priorities and related resources of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and calls for the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General, including with a view to aligning the mission's substantive functions in support of peace efforts with the Secretary-General's emphasis on

integrating conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peacebuilding into the three pillars of the work of the United Nations within Afghanistan, including in support of an intra Afghan dialogue leading to a stable and inclusive political environment;

4. *Decides* to extend until 17 March 2019 the mandate of UNAMA, as defined in its resolutions 1662 (2006), 1746 (2007), 1806 (2008), 1868 (2009), 1917 (2010), 1974 (2011), 2041 (2012), 2096 (2013), 2145 (2014), 2210 (2015), 2274 (2016), 2344 (2017) and paragraphs 6 and 7 below;

5. *Recognizes* that the renewed mandate of UNAMA is in support of Afghanistan's full assumption of leadership and ownership in the security, governance and development areas, consistent with the Transformation Decade (2015–2024) and with the understandings reached between Afghanistan and the international community in the international conferences in Kabul (2010), London (2010 and 2014), Bonn (2011), Tokyo (2012) and Brussels (2016), and the NATO Summits held in Lisbon (2010), Chicago (2012), Wales (2014), Warsaw (2016) and Brussels (2017);

6. *Decides further* that UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, within their mandate and in a manner consistent with Afghan sovereignty, leadership and ownership, will continue to lead and coordinate the international civilian efforts, in full cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan and in accordance with the London, Kabul, Tokyo and Brussels Conferences Communiqués and the Bonn Conference Conclusions, with a particular focus on the priorities laid out below:

(a) provide outreach as well as good offices to support, if requested by and in close consultation with the government of Afghanistan, the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, including through support to the High Peace Council and its activities and proposing and supporting confidence-building measures also in close consultation with the government of Afghanistan within the framework of the Afghan Constitution and with full respect for the implementation of measures and application of the procedures introduced by the Security Council in its resolutions 1267 (1999), 1988 (2011), 1989 (2011) and 2082 (2012), 2083 (2012) and 2255 (2015) as well as other relevant resolutions of the Council;

(b) support, at the request of the Afghan authorities, the organization of future Afghan elections, including the parliamentary and district council elections as foreseen for 2018 and the presidential elections in 2019, as well as to strengthen, in support of the Government of Afghanistan's efforts, including electoral reform efforts, the sustainability, integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process, as agreed at the London, Kabul, Bonn, Tokyo and Brussels Conferences and the Chicago Summit; and provide capacity-building and technical assistance to the Afghan institutions involved in this process in close consultation and coordination with the government of Afghanistan;

(c) promote, as co-chair of the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), more coherent support by the international community to the Afghan Government's development and governance priorities, including through supporting the ongoing development and sequencing of the Government's reform agenda, mobilization of resources, coordination of international donors and organizations as facilitator and co-convener of development policy fora, including in developing and monitoring frameworks of mutual accountability, promoting coherent information sharing and analysis, design and delivery of development assistance in a manner consistent with Afghan sovereignty, leadership and ownership, and direction of the contributions of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, based on the "One UN" approach, in particular for counter-narcotics, reconstruction and development activities; at the same time, coordinate also in a manner consistent with the Afghan

leadership, ownership and sovereignty, international partners for follow-up, in particular through information sharing, prioritize efforts to increase the proportion of development aid delivered through the Afghan Government, in line with the commitments made at the Kabul and Tokyo Conferences, and support efforts to increase the mutual accountability and transparency, and the effectiveness of aid use in line with the commitments made at the Kabul, Tokyo and Brussels Conferences, including cost-effectiveness in this regard;

(d) support regional cooperation, with a view to assisting Afghanistan utilize its role at the heart of Asia to promote regional cooperation, and to work towards a stable and prosperous Afghanistan, building on the achievements made;

(e) continue, with the support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, to cooperate with and strengthen the capacity of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC), to cooperate also with the Afghan Government and relevant international and local non-governmental organizations to monitor the situation of civilians, to coordinate efforts to ensure their protection, to monitor places of detention, to promote accountability, and to assist in the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution and international treaties to which Afghanistan is a State party, in particular those regarding the full enjoyment by women of their human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);

(f) closely coordinate and cooperate, where relevant, with the non-combat Resolute Support Mission agreed upon between NATO and Afghanistan, as well as with the NATO Senior Civilian Representative;

7. *Calls on* UNAMA and the Special Representative to further increase efforts to achieve greater coherence, coordination and efficiency among relevant United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes in Afghanistan based on a "One UN" approach in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan with a view to maximizing their collective effectiveness in full alignment with the Government of Afghanistan's reform agenda, and continue to lead, in a manner fully consistent with the Afghan leadership, ownership and sovereignty, international civilian efforts aimed at reinforcing the role of Afghan institutions to perform their responsibilities, with an increased focus on capacity building in key areas identified by the Afghan Government, with a view, in all UN programmes and activities, to move towards a national implementation model with a clear action-oriented strategy for mutually agreed condition-based transition to Afghan leadership and ownership including making greater use of country systems, in the following priority areas:

(a) support through an appropriate UNAMA presence, to be determined in full consultation and cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan, and in support of the Afghan Government's efforts, implementation of the Kabul Process throughout the country, including through enhanced cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in line with the Government's policies;

(b) support the efforts of the Afghan Government in fulfilling its commitments as stated at the London, Kabul, Bonn and Tokyo Conferences, to improve governance and the rule of law including transitional justice, budget execution and the fight against corruption, throughout the country in accordance with the Kabul Process and the Self-Reliance through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF), with a view to helping bring the benefits of peace and the delivery of services in a timely and sustainable manner;

(c) coordinate and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including in support of the Afghan Government and in accordance with humanitarian principles,

with a view to reinforcing the Government's capacity, including by providing effective support to national and local authorities in assisting and protecting internally displaced persons and to creating conditions conducive to the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of refugees from neighbouring and other countries and internally displaced persons, with a particular focus on development solutions in areas of high returns;

8. *Calls upon* all Afghan and international parties to coordinate with UNAMA in the implementation of its mandate and in efforts to promote the security and freedom of movement of United Nations and associated personnel throughout the country;

9. *Stresses* the critical importance of a continued and appropriate presence of UNAMA and other United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes in the provinces, based on a "One UN" approach and in close consultation and coordination with and in support of the priorities of the Afghan Government, in response to needs and with a view to security and including the objective of overall United Nations effectiveness;

10. *Welcomes* the continuing efforts of the Afghan Government to advance the peace process, including by the High Peace Council and the provincial peace committees, and the implementation of the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme, to promote an inclusive, Afghan-led and Afghan-owned dialogue on reconciliation and political participation, including the effective and meaningful participation of women and women's rights groups, as laid forth in the Kabul Conference Communiqué on dialogue for all those who as part of an outcome of such a process renounce violence, have no links to international terrorist organizations, respect the Constitution and are willing to join in building a peaceful Afghanistan, and as further elaborated in the principles and outcomes of the Bonn Conference Conclusions, and encourages the Government of Afghanistan to make use of UNAMA's good offices to support this process as appropriate, in full respect of the implementation of measures and procedures introduced by the relevant Security Council resolutions;

11. *Stresses* the role of UNAMA in supporting, if requested by and in close consultation with the Government of Afghanistan, an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, while continuing to assess, including in collaboration with the AIHRC, the impact of the aforementioned peace process, with reference to the relevant parameters set out in the Kabul Conference Communique' and the Bonn Conference Conclusions, and encourages the international community to assist the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan in this regard;

12. *Calls on* all regional and international partners of Afghanistan to continue efforts to support peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan, through the Kabul Process for Peace and Security, initiated on 6 June 2017 in Kabul under the leadership of the Government of Afghanistan, working toward holding early, direct talks between the Government of Afghanistan and authorized representatives of Taliban groups, and welcomes ongoing international efforts to advance peace and stability in Afghanistan;

13. *Welcomes* the adoption of the Strategic Plan for Peace and Reconciliation presented by the High Peace Council of Afghanistan, calls for its effective implementation, emphasizes that the peace agreement signed between the Government of Afghanistan and the High Peace Council with Hezb-e-Islami (HIG) of 29 September 2016 is an important development in the Government's overall peace efforts and calls for its effective implementation;

14. *Underscores* the importance of a sustainable democratic development in Afghanistan based on inclusive, transparent and credible elections, welcomes in that

regard the forthcoming organization of parliamentary and district council elections in 2018 and presidential elections in 2019 in line with the relevant international conferences and the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to deliver further improvements to the electoral process and emphasizes the importance of accelerated progress in this regard, and requests that, upon the request of the Government of Afghanistan, UNAMA provides assistance to the relevant Afghan institutions to support the integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process, including measures to enable the full and safe participation of women, both as voters and candidates;

15. *Welcomes* the new Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF) setting out the strategic policy priorities of Afghanistan towards achieving Self-Reliance and the presentation of 5 new national priority programs, on a citizens' charter, women's economic empowerment, urban development, comprehensive agriculture and national infrastructure, to improve the conditions for advancing sustainable development and stability, and welcomes the international community's long-term support for Afghanistan on the basis of mutual accountability as stated in the SMAF, and underlines the crucial importance of continued and sequenced implementation of the reform agenda, national priority programs and the development and governance goals as agreed in the SMAF;

16. *Calls on* international donors and organizations and the Afghan Government to adhere to their commitments made at the Kabul, Bonn, Tokyo, London, and Brussels Conferences;

17. *Calls on* the United Nations, as well as the broader international community, to continue to support the Government of Afghanistan's reform agenda;

18. *Reaffirms* the central role played by the JCMB, in a manner consistent with Afghan leadership, ownership and sovereignty, in facilitating the coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Government of Afghanistan's reform agenda, and calls upon all relevant actors to enhance their cooperation with the JCMB in this regard;

19. *Reiterates* the importance of increasing, in a comprehensive framework, the functionality, professionalism and accountability of the Afghan security sector in line with resolution 1325 (2000) and its successor resolutions on Women, Peace and Security, including 2242 (2015), through appropriate vetting procedures, women's equal and effective participation and full involvement in all stages of the security sector reform process, and training, including on women's and children's rights and their protection, in support of the implementation of Afghanistan's 1325 National Action Plan, and stresses the importance of the commitment by the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to ensure a capable, professional and sustainable Afghan National Defence and Security Force (ANDSF);

20. *Welcomes* in this context the continued progress in the development of the Afghan National Army and its improved ability to plan and undertake operations, and encourages sustained training efforts and assistance, including through the contribution of trainers, resources, advisory teams, advice in developing a sustainable defence planning process, and assistance in defence reform initiatives;

21. *Welcomes* the ongoing efforts of the Afghan authorities to enhance the capabilities of the Afghan National Police, calls for further efforts towards that goal, including the commitment by the Ministry of Interior and the Afghan National Police to develop an effective strategy for coordinating increased recruitment, retention, training and capacity development for women in the Afghan National Police, fully implement Afghanistan's 1325 National Action Plan, and further the implementation of their gender integration strategy, stresses the importance of international assistance through financial support and provision of trainers and mentors, and notes the

importance of a sufficient and capable police force for Afghanistan's long-term security;

22. *Reiterates* its concern about the security situation in Afghanistan, in particular the ongoing region based violence and attacks by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, as well as by Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates and other terrorist groups, violent and extremist groups, illegal armed groups, criminals, and foreign terrorist fighters, and calls upon all States in this regard to strengthen their international and regional security cooperation to enhance information-sharing, border control, law enforcement and criminal justice to better counter the threat posed, including from returning foreign terrorist fighters;

23. *Condemns* in the strongest terms all attacks, including improvised explosive device attacks, suicide attacks, assassinations and abductions, targeting civilians and Afghan and international forces and their deleterious effect on the stabilization, reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan, and condemns further the use by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network as well as Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates, and by other terrorist groups, violent and extremist groups, and illegal armed groups of civilians as human shields, and underlines the need to hold perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of such acts accountable and bring them to justice, and urges all states, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, to cooperate actively with the Government of Afghanistan and all other relevant authorities in this regard;

24. *Strongly condemns* the continued flow of weapons, including small arms and light weapons (SALW), military equipment and IED components to the Taliban, including the Haqqani network, as well as by Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates and other terrorist groups, violent and extremist groups, illegal armed groups and criminals, and encourages Member States to share information, establish partnerships and develop national strategies and capabilities to counter IEDs;

25. *Further condemns* in the strongest terms all acts of violence against diplomatic and consular officials and other representatives of the international community in Afghanistan;

26. *Strongly condemns* the continued attacks against humanitarian and development workers, and urges all parties to the conflict to comply fully with international humanitarian law, and to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe, rapid, and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel, as well as the delivery of supplies and equipment, in order to allow such personnel to efficiently perform their task of assisting affected civilian populations, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

27. *Reiterates* that all parties to armed conflict must comply fully with the obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law to ensure the respect and protection of humanitarian personnel and medical personnel, their means of transport and equipment, as well as hospitals and other medical facilities;

28. *Reiterates* its support for the Government of Afghanistan, and in particular to the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF), in securing their country and in their fight against terrorism, including in relation to the nexus with transnational organized crime, and against violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and calls upon the Afghan Government, with the assistance of the international community, to continue to address the threat to the security and stability of Afghanistan posed by the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, as well as by Al Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates and other terrorist groups, violent and extremist

groups, illegal armed groups, criminals and those involved in the production, trafficking or trade of illicit drugs;

29. *Stresses* that effective inter- and intra-agency cooperation by law enforcement and security agencies is a critical element of an effective counter-terrorism strategy, and encourages Afghanistan to further strengthen coordination, both among national law enforcement bodies and with counterparts in other States, recognizes the ongoing efforts by Afghanistan in creating a comprehensive and integrated national strategy to counter terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, and encourages Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, to further develop such a strategy as well as effective mechanisms for its implementation that include attention to the conditions conducive to terrorism in accordance with obligations of Afghanistan under international law, and recalls the recommendations and related technical assistance needs identified in the Report on the focused visit of the Counter-Terrorism Committee to Afghanistan;

30. *Encourages* the engagement of relevant local communities and non-governmental actors and the participation and leadership of women and women's organizations in developing strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism as and when conducive to terrorism, including through countering incitement to commit terrorist acts, creating counter narratives and other appropriate interventions, and building their capacity to do so effectively;

31. *Stresses* the importance of relevant national strategies for the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of foreign terrorist fighters;

32. *Welcomes* the achievements to date in the implementation of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, notably the ratification of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and encourages the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the United Nations and all the relevant actors, to adopt an action plan for its effective implementation and to continue its efforts towards the removal and destruction of anti-personnel landmines, anti-tank landmines and explosive remnants of war and to provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation, and economic and social reintegration of victims;

33. *Notes concern over* the continued high levels of child casualties and recruitment and use of children in Afghanistan, in particular by terrorist and extremist groups, commends the Government of Afghanistan for introducing legislation banning the recruitment and use of children in its armed forces and for establishing local child protection units, and welcomes the progress made on the implementation of the action plan for the prevention of underage recruitment, stresses the need for protection of schools and hospitals, reiterates its strong condemnation of all violations and abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict, and calls for those responsible to be brought to justice, and in this context, requests UNAMA to continue to support efforts to strengthen the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including engagement with the Afghan Government to fully implement the Action Plan and Road Map, and actions to promote accountability and address other violations and abuses, including sexual violence against children, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to give priority to the child protection activities and capacity of UNAMA and to include in his future reports the matter of children and armed conflict in the country in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions;

34. *Calls upon* States to strengthen their efforts as well as international and regional cooperation to counter the threat to the international community posed by the production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit drugs originating in Afghanistan which significantly contribute to the financial resources of the Taliban and its associates and could also benefit Al-Qaida, ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates and other

terrorist groups, and to act in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility in addressing the drug problem of Afghanistan, including through cooperation against the trafficking in illicit drugs and precursor chemicals, also underlining the importance of border management cooperation, emphasizes the need for enhanced regional and international support of Afghanistan's National Drug Action Plan (NDAP), and welcomes the continued efforts of the UNODC in empowering the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics in its implementation, and appreciates the work of the Paris Pact initiative, its "Paris-Moscow" process and its partners, including the EU, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), as well as the work of the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre for combating the illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors (CARICC), and encourages the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) and the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) to continue to pay attention to the linkages between the proceeds of organized crime, inter alia, the illicit production and trafficking of drugs and their chemical precursors and the financing, respectively, of the Taliban, including the Haqqani Network, and of ISIL (also known as Da'esh), Al-Qaida, and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities;

35. *Reiterates* the importance of accelerating the establishment of a fair and transparent justice system, eliminating impunity and strengthening the rule of law throughout the country, stresses the importance of further progress in the reconstruction and reform of the prison sector in Afghanistan, in order to improve the respect for the rule of law and human rights therein, emphasizes the importance of ensuring access for relevant organizations, as applicable, to all prisons and places of detention in Afghanistan, welcomes the National Plan on the Elimination of Torture as well as the revised Penal Code and efforts of the Government of Afghanistan at taking steps to ensure consistency with Afghanistan's international obligations and commitments, emphasizes the need for full implementation of such efforts, calls upon the Government of Afghanistan to fulfil its expressed commitment to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and calls for full respect for relevant international law including humanitarian law and human rights law;

36. *Recognizes* the anti-corruption commitments by the Government of Afghanistan and welcomes in this regard the establishment of the High Council on Rule of Law, Governance, Justice and Anti-Corruption, the Anti-Corruption Justice Center and National Procurement Commission, and the adoption of the national anti-corruption strategy on 28 September, and calls for its effective implementation, encourages all Afghan institutions, including the executive and legislative branches, to tackle corruption and to ensure good governance, welcomes progress in this regard, and stresses the need for further national efforts to implement plans for addressing corruption as well as international efforts to provide technical assistance in this area;

37. *Calls for* full respect for and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law, throughout Afghanistan, and notes with concern the continued restrictions on freedom of media, including attacks against journalists by terrorist as well as extremist and criminal groups, as well as ongoing reports of threats against human rights defenders, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, religious figures as well as investigators, judges and prosecutors;

38. *Calls for* enhanced efforts to secure the rights of women and girls and to ensure that women and girls are protected from violence and abuse, including from sexual- and gender-based violence, and that perpetrators of such violence and abuse are held accountable, and emphasizes the importance of ensuring equal protection

under the law, equality before the courts in accordance with international law, and equal access to justice, including through measurable and action-oriented objectives and the integration of gender expertise, knowledge and capacity;

39. *Welcomes* the commitment of the Government of Afghanistan to empower women politically and economically, and reiterates in this regard the importance of increasing the full and effective participation and leadership of women in decision-making, including in peace talks and overall peacebuilding strategies at the national and subnational level, and calls on the Government of Afghanistan to fully implement and finance the 1325 National Action Plan, and encourages the Government of Afghanistan to identify further opportunities to support participation of women in the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process, and requests the support of UNAMA in this regard, and requests the Secretary General to continue to include in his reports to the Security Council relevant information on the process of integration of women into the political, economic and social life of Afghanistan and further calls upon members of the international community to provide assistance as appropriate;

40. *Reaffirms* its support to the ongoing Afghan-led regional efforts within the framework of the "Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan" and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA) Summits, and welcomes ongoing efforts to build trust and cooperation, including by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, SCO, including its Afghanistan contact group which met in Moscow on 11 October 2017, CSTO, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), as well as through the Moscow dialogue consultations, the Quadrilateral Coordination Group of Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and the United States of America, the Trilateral Summit of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, the Trilateral Summit of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Turkey, the Trilateral Summit of Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UK, the China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Minister's Dialogue, and the Quadrilateral Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism (QCCM) in Counter Terrorism by Afghanistan, China, Pakistan and Tajikistan;

41. *Welcomes and urges* further efforts to strengthen the process of regional economic cooperation, including measures to facilitate regional connectivity, trade and transit, including through regional development initiatives such as the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road (the Belt and Road) Initiative, and regional development projects, such as the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, the Central Asia South Asia Electricity Transmission and Trade Project (CASA-1000), the Chabahar port project, agreed between Afghanistan, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Lapis Lazuli Transit, Trade and Transport Route agreement and the Turkmenistan-Aqina and Herat-Khawaf railway segments, and bilateral transit trade agreements, expanded consular visa cooperation and facilitation of business travel, to expand trade, increase foreign investments and develop infrastructure, including infrastructural connectivity, energy supply, transport and integrated border management, with a view to promoting sustainable economic growth and the creation of jobs in Afghanistan and the region, and in this regard urges all relevant stakeholders to ensure a secure environment, integrate their development policies and strategies and promote the practical connectivity cooperation for these development initiatives and trade agreements to be fully implemented;

42. *Recalls* that regional security cooperation plays a key role in maintaining stability in Afghanistan and the region, welcomes the progress achieved by Afghanistan and regional partners in this regard, and calls for further efforts by Afghanistan and regional partners and organizations, to strengthen their partnership

and cooperation, including to enhance the capabilities of the Afghan security forces and to enhance security in the region;

43. *Expresses* its concern over the continued high levels of internally displaced persons in and refugees from Afghanistan, strongly encourages intensified efforts by the Government of Afghanistan in ensuring the protection of all internally displaced persons in line with the Afghanistan national policy on Internally Displaced Persons and in making voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Afghan refugees in safe and dignified conditions among its highest national priorities, strongly supports the Government of Afghanistan's efforts to create the necessary conditions for the voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration of Afghan refugees in the country, and calls for continued and enhanced international assistance in this regard;

44. *Requests* that the Secretary-General reports to the Council every three months on developments in Afghanistan, and to include in his reports an evaluation of progress made against the benchmarks for measuring and tracking progress in the implementation of UNAMA's mandate, including at the subnational level, and priorities as set out in this resolution;

45. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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Letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

On instructions of the Government of my country, the Syrian Arab Republic, in its capacity as a concerned State, I wish to make the following comments regarding the twenty-first report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and the Taliban and associated individuals and entities, which was circulated by a letter dated 17 January 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011), and 2253 (2015) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/14/Rev.1).

My Government notes with pleasure and a sense of optimism the qualitative improvement in the content of the reports of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team. The Team has taken into account numerous pieces of intelligence and analysis that it was able to gather in the previous months as a result of communication and cooperation with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. That communication and cooperation became much stronger following the visit of the Team to Damascus on 21 and 22 November 2017. The members of the Team met with representatives of several Syrian Government counter-terrorism agencies.

My Government welcomes the report's focus on the ongoing threat posed by the terrorist organization Nusrah Front (QDe.137) to regional and international peace and security. As stated in the report, the Nusrah Front is the strongest, largest and most dangerous military affiliate of the Al-Qaida organization, and it has thousands of foreign terrorist fighters in its ranks. The Syrian Arab Republic firmly believes that eliminating the organization would require an immediate end to the various forms of financial and military support that it continues to receive, directly or indirectly, from the Governments of certain States, foremost among which are Qatar and Turkey.

Accordingly, the Syrian Arab Republic does not agree with the assessment made in paragraph 18 of the report that the Nusrah Front is self-sufficient in terms of financing. That assessment negates, and indeed fails even to consider, that foreign funding could play a part. The Nusrah Front is still receiving direct financial support from the Governments of certain States, foremost among which, as stated above, are Qatar and Turkey. It also receives funding and donations from numerous other countries, particularly in the Arab Gulf region. Moreover, hundreds of so-called charitable associations and civil society organizations located in the areas controlled by the Nusrah Front are masquerading as humanitarian organizations while they are

in fact affiliated with the group. Those entities receive funds from abroad, especially through donations and other financing that are indulged, facilitated or simply ignored by the Governments of the countries in question.

Similarly, numerous cross-border humanitarian assistance convoys, especially those entering from Turkey, are still being used as a means to transport weapons, funds and logistical, food or medical assistance to the armed terrorist groups, particularly the terrorist organization Nusrah Front. This is because the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism for the Syrian Arab Republic has been ineffective in fulfilling its mandate to monitor and oversee the loading of the convoys, inspect their contents and monitor their journey from Turkish territory until their final destination on Syrian territory. Indeed, the food, medical and medicinal supplies transported in humanitarian assistance convoys are still ultimately falling into the hands of the armed terrorist groups. The international community as a whole is still mindful of what happened when the eastern neighbourhoods of Aleppo city were liberated from the groups. The warehouses that were under terrorist control in those neighbourhoods were stocked with dozens of tons of such supplies, which were being withheld from the people who needed them, or were being sold to them at unaffordable prices, or were being kept for terrorist leaders and operatives and their families.

The report rightly states that the armed terrorist groups, particularly ISIL and the Nusrah Front, have looted cultural and religious heritage and artefacts in the Syrian Arab Republic with a view to trafficking them and smuggling them abroad for sale to Western buyers. In that regard, my Government wishes to stress that the customs and security authorities that control the borders in neighbouring States, particularly Turkey, are still to this day either complicit or indulgent as regards the cross-border smuggling of Syrian artefacts and heritage. In point of fact, my Government wishes to transmit highly credible intelligence to the effect that the terrorist groups that are active in the area of Jawbar, near Damascus, cooperated with the Turkish and Israeli intelligence services to loot artefacts and manuscripts from the ancient synagogue there. The items were then taken to the town of Kafr Batna in Rif Dimashq before being smuggled through local and foreign intermediaries to Istanbul, where they were received by antiquities experts who certified that they were extremely valuable antique objects. The items were subsequently smuggled to New York.

The Syrian Arab Republic asserts its sovereign right under international law and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council to recover all of the cultural assets that have been stolen, including those from the Jawbar synagogue. For that purpose, it is open and willing to cooperate with the Team and with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and to provide and exchange additional information in that regard.

My Government would like to lodge an official protest in respect of paragraph 62, entitled "Impact assessment", and to state that it categorically rejects the substance thereof. Without justification, the Team took a political position in that paragraph, something that it had never done in its previous reports, by praising the counter-terrorism efforts of Saudi Arabia, which, according to the report, had convened the first meeting of the Council of the Ministers of Defence of the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition, a coalition of 41 Member States dedicated to fighting ISIL. In that same paragraph, the Team also praised Turkey for having taken measures aimed at denying ISIL access to the financial system as well as its generation of funds and to disrupt the movement of foreign terrorist fighters and funds through middlemen or facilitators.

In its previous 20 reports, the Team clearly and consistently took a purely technical approach and avoided directly criticizing any State for supporting terrorism

or directly praising any State for its counter-terrorism efforts. In the opinion of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, it makes no sense that United Nations organs have not yet made any effort to identify the root causes of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon and the reasons for its spread. It is also puzzling why those organs have failed to investigate the involvement of specific Governments and intelligence agencies in that phenomenon. That notwithstanding, the Syrian Government finds it strange and unacceptable that the Team should now praise the efforts of Governments that support and finance terrorism in Syria and Iraq, and that bear primary responsibility for the rise and spread of the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon.

The Syrian Arab Republic therefore wishes to make it known that it objects to and absolutely rejects paragraph 62, and officially calls for that paragraph to be deleted in full. If the paragraph is not deleted, then my country's delegation will object to the inclusion of any reference to the Team's twenty-first report in any future draft resolution or United Nations report.

The Syrian Arab Republic notes that the twenty-first report includes more than one reference to persons and entities that are not on Security Council lists but have close ties with listed terrorist groups, such as ISIL and the Nusrah Front. This is a very important matter and highlights the need for the Team to conduct in-depth studies of the many extremist armed groups that are not listed. Doing so would enable the Team to understand that those groups are linked to listed terrorist entities and that they share the same extremist ideology, violent agenda and terrorist identity. In fact, those groups are working together to expand their operations on a global scale, thereby threatening international peace and security. As the concerned Member State, the Syrian Arab Republic stands ready to assist the Team in that regard and invites it to assess and study the situation of and the links between the many armed terrorist groups that are active in Syrian territory with support and funding from the Governments of certain Member States. Those groups include such armed groups as the Army of Islam, which is backed by Saudi Arabia, the Rahman Corps, which is backed by Qatar, and the Ahrar al-Sham Islamic Movement, which is backed by Turkey and Qatar. The latter group is linked financially to ISIL, with which it splits the funds obtained from certain border crossing points that it controls. These extremist armed groups have organizational and financial ties with the ISIL terrorist organization, with which they split the funds they derive from stealing artefacts and oil, and from the "tariffs" they collect at border crossings and checkpoints. To this day, they maintain strategic military relations with the Nusrah Front terrorist organization, including alliances and partnerships, chain of command and coordination of terrorist military activity on the ground in various parts of Syria.

With regard to paragraph 66, my Government would like to make it clear that when the Panel's experts visited Syria on 20 and 21 November 2017, they were informed that armed terrorist groups had raided immigration and passport offices in several parts of the country and seized some 9,700 blank Syrian passports. Moreover, ISIL is not the only terrorist organization that seized blank passports. Other terrorist groups, at the forefront of which is the Nusrah Front terrorist organization, engaged in this terrorist activity. Thus, it is not only ISIL terrorists who might misuse those passports, but also the members of the various other armed terrorist groups that are active in the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

In conclusion, the Syrian Arab Republic reiterates that the resolutions of the Security Council concerning counter-terrorism are effective tools in the effort to curb and eliminate the threat of terrorism. However, the real problem continues to be the lack of genuine desire on the part of the Governments of certain Member States to comply with those resolutions, some of which were adopted under Chapter VII, and the insistence of others on using terrorism as a political and military weapon to

intervene in the affairs of States. One must keep in mind that the sanctions list and the measures stipulated in the resolutions of the Security Council concerning counter-terrorism apply to anyone who facilitates or is involved in the financing of acts of terrorism, even if the person is the representative of a government, a State or an intelligence agency.

Syria will therefore continue to call upon the specialized agencies of the United Nations to look into the reasons and factors that truly gave rise to the foreign terrorist fighter phenomenon, and to identify the Governments, intelligence agencies and other actors that are behind a phenomenon that now threatens international peace and security.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Agenda item 34
Prevention of armed conflict

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instructions of my Government, I enclose herewith the statement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on the 30th anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms (see annex I) and the statement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) on the 30th anniversary of the massacre of the Armenian population of Sumgait (see annex II), both of which were adopted on 28 February 2018.

Thirty years have passed since the anti-Armenian pogroms in Sumgait, an Azerbaijani city the name of which has become to many Armenians an embodiment of horror, mass atrocities and dehumanizing crimes.

The pogroms perpetrated in Sumgait from 27 to 29 February 1988, mark the beginning of massacres and ethnic cleansing of the Armenian population, carried out subsequently in the cities of Baku, Kirovabad and other settlements in Soviet Azerbaijan, as well as in Nagorno-Karabakh.

The premeditated massacre in Sumgait was the reaction of Azerbaijan to the legitimate, constitutional, democratic and peaceful process in the exercise of the right to self-determination by the people of Nagorno-Karabakh. Those atrocities were the very reason that prompted the late Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei Sakharov to assert that, "even if some doubted it before Sumgait, no one sees a moral opportunity to insist on the territorial unity of Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan after this tragedy happened". On 7 July 1988, the European Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the massacres in Sumgait.

Azerbaijan's attempts to conceal those atrocities are a shameful manifestation of denial and failure to assume responsibility. The authorities of Azerbaijan spare no effort to obscure and manipulate facts and to shield the masterminds and perpetrators of the atrocities against the Armenian population of Sumgait. The joint statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prosecutor General's Office of Azerbaijan of 22 February 2018 on the so-called investigation into the Armenian pogroms in the city of Sumgait, the content of which represents outright absurdity, is at the same time a blatant whitewash of the acts of the then leadership of Azerbaijan. It is also a stark

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manifestation of the policy of anti-Armenian hatred and xenophobia, which has become the modus operandi of Azerbaijan since 1988.

It is this kind of anti-Armenian propaganda that has incited continuous atrocities against Armenians, including the gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the armed forces of Azerbaijan during the aggression against Nagorno-Karabakh in April 2016. The cultivation of hatred and xenophobia against Armenians has become a consistent practice in Azerbaijan. Reputable international bodies, including from within the United Nations and the Council of Europe, have consistently reported such policies.

Today, we pay tribute to the memory of the innocent victims of Sumgait and resolutely condemn any manifestation of racism, discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance. We also pay tribute to those individual Azerbaijanis who had not succumbed to anti-Armenian hysteria and risked their lives by rescuing their Armenian neighbours.

I kindly request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Zohrab **Mnatsakanyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I to the letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on the 30th anniversary of the Sumgait pogroms

Acknowledging that 30 years ago the Sumgait pogroms were planned and perpetrated by the Azerbaijani authorities, and were yet another manifestation of Azerbaijan's consistent policy of extradition and extermination of the Armenian people from its cradle, which has commenced with the establishment of Azerbaijan in 1918 through the massacres of Armenians, particularly in Baku — 30,000 (1918) and Shushi — 20,000 (1920), then continued in the Soviet era through the forcible eviction of Armenians of Nakhijevan and other regions, as well as repressions against the Armenians of Artsakh; that this process gained momentum, particularly, with the massacres committed against the Armenians in Sumgait, Baku and Gandzak (Kirovabad) from 1988 to 1991, and, since 1991, with the large-scale aggression against Artsakh, involving thousands of mercenaries, closely related to the international terrorist organizations, the ethnic cleansings and deportations of 22 Armenian villages through "Koltso" (Ring) military operation in 1991, killings of elderly, women and children living in Maragha village of Artsakh in 1992, the occupation and de-Armenization of the Shahumyan region and part of Martakert region in 1992, killing of the population of the town of Khojaly near Aghdam committed by the Azerbaijani armed groups with the aim of using it for the internal power struggle in Azerbaijan and attributing it to the Armenians, the glorification of those who committed crimes against Armenians, disseminating of anti-Armenian hatred and intolerance, the annihilation of the Armenian historical-cultural heritage, falsification of history, violation of the 1994–1995 trilateral ceasefire agreements, which have no time limitation, and subversive penetrations, killing of peaceful population and the military personnel, targeted bombings of civilian infrastructure, the new large-scale aggression against Artsakh in April 2016, which was accompanied with the gross violations of the international humanitarian law, namely, killings of children, women and elderly, mutilation of corpses of soldiers, beheadings of captured Armenian soldiers in the style of terrorist groups,

Acknowledging the fact, that in response to the peaceful demands of the people of Artsakh, who were under threat of ethnic cleansing, de-Armenization and physical extermination, to realise, in accordance with the norms and principles of international law and in line with the existing at that time legislation, one of the fundamental principles of international law, namely, the equality and self-determination of peoples, the Azerbaijani authorities perpetrated anti-Armenian violence, pogroms and deportations, accompanied with the extreme anti-Armenian state-sponsored propaganda, which has made the existence of Armenians in Azerbaijan impossible,

Stating that the Azerbaijani authorities, opposing the efforts of the international community and the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairs, undermine the negotiation process on the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and continue to rely on the use of force and threat of force,

The National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia

Condemns the massive violence, murders and deportations of peaceful population by Azerbaijan, as well as the Armenophobic, racist policy and the aggressive military actions unleashed against Nagorno-Karabakh;

Commemorates the innocent victims of Azerbaijani crimes against Armenians;

Calls on the Parliaments and the Parliamentary Assemblies, the international organizations and human rights bodies:

– ***to condemn*** the committed and ongoing atrocities of Azerbaijan against the peaceful population as well as the violations of the humanitarian law which threaten not only the Armenian people, but also the security, stability and development of the whole region;

– ***to undertake*** practical steps to prevent them.

28.02.2018

Annex II to the letter dated 6 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

National Assembly of the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)

Statement on the 30th anniversary of the massacre of the Armenian population of Sumgait

On 27–29 February 1988, atrocities against and forced deportation of the Armenian population was carried out by the Azerbaijani authorities in Sumgait, just 30 kilometers from Baku. Hundreds of Armenians, mostly women, children and elderly people, fell victim to a pre-planned massacre; thousands of Armenians were forcibly deported and their property — plundered.

The crime committed in Sumgait was another manifestation of the policy of discrimination, ethnic cleansing and expulsion of Armenian people, which, following the example of Nakhichevan, was carried out with impunity by the Azerbaijani authorities during the Soviet period. It later continued in Baku, Gandzak (Kirovabad) and other Armenian settlements of Northern Artsakh. By these atrocities, the Baku authorities threatened the Artsakh Armenians who stood to defend their rights, and keeping the Armenians of Eastern Transcaucasia as a hostage.

Meanwhile, the national liberation struggle that was unfolding in Artsakh in those days was called to put an end to the infringements of national dignity of the Armenian people and the genocidal policy of the Azerbaijani authorities.

Paying tribute to the memory of the innocent Armenians who fell victim to the genocide in Sumgait and being convinced that the impunity for the pogroms and massacre of the Armenian population organized at state level led to new crimes and a war by Azerbaijan against the people of the newly independent Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, the National Assembly of the Artsakh Republic:

condemns any manifestation of discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance;

believes that official Baku continues to pursue a policy of genocide, the latest evidence of which were crimes committed against the civilian population of Artsakh in April 2016;

reaffirms that the Artsakh Republic will be consistent in restoring and protecting the rights of Azerbaijani Armenians who were exposed to violence and deportation;

urges parliamentary structures and international human rights organizations, on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of mass pogroms and atrocities against the Armenian population of Sumgait, to condemn the genocidal acts committed by Baku against the Armenians of Azerbaijan.

28 February 2018
Stepanakert

United Nations S/2018/201

Security Council

Distr.: General
7 March 2018

Original: English

Identical letters dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Following the numerous previous letters that I have addressed to you regarding the repeated and continuing terrorist attacks by armed terrorist groups on the city of Damascus and its suburbs, and upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to submit herewith a table clarifying the number of civilians killed and injured as a result of rocket-propelled grenades and mortar shells launched by armed terrorist groups against safe neighbourhoods in Damascus from 3 to 5 March 2018. These terrorist attacks have killed and wounded many civilians, mostly women and children, as well as causing serious damage to public and private property and infrastructure.

Date	*Number of rocket-propelled grenades and mortar shells launched*	*Number of civilians killed*	*Number of civilians injured*
3 March 2018	33	–	–
4 March 2018	42	1	5
5 March 2018	24	1	41
Total	**99**	**2**	**46**

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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United Nations S/2018/202

Security Council

Distr.: General
9 March 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith an information bulletin dated 7 March 2018 from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (7 March 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the Memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported 17 incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: 8 in Ladhiqiyah, 6 in Damascus and 3 in Aleppo.

The Turkish representative office has reported 10 incidents of gunfire: 9 in Damascus Governorate and 1 in Idlib Governorate.

Most of the incidents of mortars and small arms being fired indiscriminately have been reported in areas controlled by fighters belonging to terrorist groups.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out two humanitarian operations: one in Hama city and one in Afsh in Aleppo Governorate. Food with a total cargo weight of 4.5 tons was delivered to the local population.

In total, 1,766 humanitarian operations have been carried out.

The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 2,478.5 tons.

Over the past 24 hours, medical assistance has been provided to 205 persons.

In total, medical assistance has been provided to 72,674 persons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed with populated areas over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is unchanged — it is still 2,427.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/203

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 March 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Ahead of the preparation of your first report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018), I have the honour to forward to you herewith information on violations of the resolution by terrorist and illegal armed groups in Syria on 6 and 7 March 2018 (see annex I), as well as a report on the delivery of humanitarian aid to Duma on 5 March 2018 (see annex II).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vassily **Nebenzia**

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Annex I to the letter dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

6 March 2018. Jabhat al-Nusra militants and allied armed groups in eastern Ghutah launched rocket and mortar strikes on the Damascus districts of Bab Tuma, the area of Abbasiyin Square and Assad suburb. The Damascus Police Hospital and Ibn Sina Hospital in Adra were also damaged by the shelling. Fifteen civilians were injured.

Local illegal armed groups in the Homs de-escalation zone provoked clashes with the Syrian Army near Javalik, Mahattah, Sanisal and Tayr Ma'lah.

A hospital in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, in the Idlib de-escalation zone, ceased operations for security reasons because of a conflict between Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, led by Jabhat al-Nusra, and the jihadist alliance The Syrian Liberation Front. There is a threat of closure of other local health facilities because of security concerns.

Jabhat al-Nusra terrorists shelled Fu'ah and Kafraya enclaves, north of Idlib, with mortars, killing several civilians.

Information on the activities of illegal armed groups in the eastern Ghutah de-escalation zone undermining the implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018) (as at 6 March 2018, 9 a.m. Moscow time)

1. Illegal armed groups repeatedly shelled residential districts along the perimeter of the eastern Ghutah de-escalation zone with mortars. In a 24-hour period there were more than 20 120-mm shell blasts, injuring several people and causing significant material damage. Seven civilians were wounded as a result of the shelling of the Tishrin Hospital in the northern part of Damascus. Snipers of the illegal armed groups were active along the border of the area. Jihadists opened fire against people attempting to leave the area.

2. Retreating militants forced local civilians to follow them. Jihadists set up weapon emplacements in residential buildings, placing civilians there as human shields. They imposed a curfew during the humanitarian pause on the territory under their control, with the aim of not allowing people to exit. Public gatherings are banned. It is demanded that people stay during sermons in the mosques.

Information on the activities of illegal armed groups in the eastern Ghutah de-escalation zone undermining the implementation of Security Council resolution 2401 (2018) (as at 7 March 2018, 9 a.m. Moscow time)

1. In the eastern Ghutah de-escalation zone, Jabhat al-Nusra militants opened fire with mortars and small weapons on the humanitarian corridor, once again preventing the exit of civilians from the zone of military operations. The most intensive fire was launched on the western part of Rayhanin, in immediate proximity to the medical post for evacuees.

Jaramana and the district of Bab Tuma also came under mortar fire. Tishrin Hospital in the Dweir al-Balad block was hit. More than 20 120-mm shells were launched, injuring some 20 people, many of whom remain in a critical condition. Snipers of illegal armed groups were active along the border of the de-escalation zone. The primary targets were civilians trying to leave the zone.

In their positions in Harasta al-Basal and Shaffuniyah (eastern Ghutah, 8 km and 14 km north-east of Damascus, respectively), the Syrian Army had no fewer than 20 mortal casualties.

2. Jaysh al-Islam militants intensified a propaganda campaign in social networks, highlighting their successes in clashes with the Syrian Army in the eastern Ghutah de-escalation zone, boasting of recapturing some previously lost villages and of significant losses in the Syrian Army. To prevent the exit of civilians from the de-escalation zone, extremists search residential areas and take the leaflets with which people can pass through the humanitarian corridor.

3. Leaders of the terrorist groups in the eastern Ghutah de-escalation zone stated that there would be no exit of Islamists, as in Aleppo in the winter of 2016. They stressed that eastern Ghutah is their land and that they have no intention of leaving it. That was their response to the initiative of the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in Syria offering security guarantees to militants who may decide to leave the de-escalation zone.

Annex II to the letter dated 7 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report on the delivery of humanitarian aid to Duma on 5 March 2018

On 5 March, international organizations and agencies, with the support of the United Nations, delivered humanitarian aid to Duma (eastern Ghutah), including medicines and medical equipment (45 trucks and one mobile clinic — ambulance with resuscitation equipment).

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides, in cooperation with the Syrian Government, provided comprehensive support for the operation. In particular, the humanitarian corridor was established, the security of the passage was ensured and the deconfliction regime and monitoring of the situation were organized. The Syrian authorities issued appropriate permits and actively participated in the preparation of the operation.

The convoy set off from the United Nations warehouse in Damascus at 9 a.m.

Representatives of international organizations arrived at the Wafidin Camp humanitarian corridor with a delay of more than an hour.

From the outset, there were attempts to include in the convoy medicines and medical equipment designated for other areas in eastern Ghutah, which was in contradiction with the agreement reached earlier with the Syrian Government.

Finally, aid amounting to 58,000 prescriptions (which corresponds to the real needs: the World Health Organization was planning to send approximately 60,000) was delivered. Despite that fact, some humanitarian workers claimed that "practically all the medicines and medical equipment had been withdrawn by the authorities", a claim that was later replicated by Western media.

As the convoy entered Duma, the accompanying staff initiated a communication campaign with leaders of local councils at one of the mosques. This lasted for more than two hours. Owing to that delay, the delivery of humanitarian aid and medicines to civilians was about to fail.

Representatives of humanitarian agencies in both Damascus and Geneva, under the pretext of the lack of time, demanded that Russia extend a humanitarian pause — at first, for two hours and then "indefinitely". The situation was presented as if only Russia and Damascus were responsible for the safety of the entire humanitarian operation.

At 5 p.m., a single mortar shell launched from Jabhat al-Nusra's positions (the eastern edge of Mudayra from across the Ayn-Arbash spring-well, as identified by intelligence) hit the area near the offloading convoy.

Representatives of the humanitarian agencies immediately blamed the Government for the shelling, calling it an air strike. At the above-mentioned period of time, there were no aircraft flying over Duma. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs circulated information that an air bomb exploded 300 m away from the convoy and allegedly caused casualties. The inspection revealed that there was neither video nor photo evidence of an alleged strike or of any wounded.

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides warned that delaying action beyond the agreed time frame could create conditions for provocations by terrorists.

During the operation, all could witness that militants were holding civilians by force as human shields. Civilians were begging the convoy's personnel to facilitate

their escape from the zone, saying that jihadists took the aid and prohibited them from leaving their homes.

On its way back, the humanitarian convoy took 13 civilians, including 5 children, out of the zone.

In the course of the mission, false reports kept coming about alleged attacks by the Syrian Army and the convoy personnel being taken hostage.

Officials of the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides uninterruptedly monitored the passage of the convoy. Representatives of the Russian military police were present at the Wafidin Camp checkpoint. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were used in real time, including at night, which facilitated uninterrupted control along the convoy's route and at the site of unloading.